French wh-in-situ questions: Why ‘givenness’ doesn’t explain all
The Puzzle: Which question would French speaker choose:

1. Qu’est-ce que tu fais ce soir?  
   What (+est-ce que) you do tonight

2. Tu fais quoi ce soir?  
   You do what tonight

“What are you doing tonight?”

What is the difference between asking those very similar questions?
Literature:

• Both wh-in-situ as well as wh-fronted questions are possible strategies to form questions in Spoken Continental French.

Semantics:

• Earlier proposals categorized these questions as “presuppositional” in that they should license a positive answer (e.g. Chang (1997), Cheng& Rooryck (2000), Boeckx (2000), Zubizarreta (2003)).
• More recent claims (e.g. Adli (2006), Baunaz & Patin (2011)) point out that fronted and in-situ license the same answers in the same contexts (i.e. in a standard Hamblin framework for questions the set of possible answer is the same, the semantics seems to be the same in that respect).

Claim in the literature: WiQs require presupposition
**Literature:**

**Pragmatics:**

- Nevertheless, it is still maintained that the distribution of in-situ questions is pragmatically constrained.
- Currently, there seems to be agreement that the in-situ interrogatives convey givenness namely that the non-wh-part of the question has to be given (in a broad sense, i.e. evoked (see Wagner (2006)) to only keep the wh-word non-given (Hamlaoui (2009, 2010), Déprez et al. (2012))

**Overall claim:** Wh-in-situ require some notion of givenness of the non-wh-content
My talk:

1. **Empirical evidence:**
   - I argue that we need to consider structural constraints for French in-situ questions
     - Speaker prefer clitics preceding the wh-phrase and scrambling of the wh-phrase (e.g. Mathieu 2016)
     - Caveat: both echo-questions and info-seeking questions present non-fronted wh-words in French
     - They are two different animals which should be studied separately

2. **Proposed Analysis:**
   - Links syntactic constraints of WiQs to prosodic constraints of French
     ➢ inspired by Richards (2010, 2016)

3. **Going back to meaning**

4. **Outlook: other Romance languages**
A fresh look at French wh-in-situ questions:

We will need to differentiate between echo in-situ questions and information-seeking in-situ question (WiQs)

Echo Questions:
- Investigate what has been said
- Not possible out of the blue
- Try to clarify the previous discourse move
- Have strict discourse and intonational constraints (parallelism)
- Example:
  B: “I ate a ### tonight.“
  A: “You ate what tonight?“

Information-seeking Questions:
- Pose a subject-matter for inquiry
- Can be uttered out of the blue
- Propose a new topic or are part of a discourse strategy to find an answer to an ongoing question.
- No constraints
- Example:
  A: “What did you eat tonight?“
  B: “I ate pasta tonight."

Difference in distribution
Differences in Prosody:

Tu viens avec qui au concert? (echo=)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>tu</th>
<th>viens</th>
<th>avec</th>
<th>qui</th>
<th>au</th>
<th>concert</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>H*</td>
<td>L</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>H</td>
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</table>

Time (s)

Tu viens avec qui au concert? (WiQ)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<td></td>
<td>L%</td>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

23/01/2018
### Syntactic Differences: well-formed surface structures in French in-situ questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WiQ</th>
<th>echo</th>
<th>Question Variation:</th>
<th>Manipulation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Anne vient au concert avec Mark</td>
<td>(declarative)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>Anne vient au concert avec qui ?</td>
<td>Subject: full DP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Anne vient avec qui?</td>
<td>Subject: full DP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>Elle vient avec qui, Anne?</td>
<td>Subject: dislocated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>Elle vient au concert avec qui, Anne?</td>
<td>Subject: clitic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Complement: full DP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓</td>
<td>(??)</td>
<td>Elle vient avec qui au concert, Anne?</td>
<td>Subject: clitic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Complement: word order</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
WiQs prefer the wh-word to be the left-most out of objects and adjuncts, no matter the canonical word-order in declarative sentences. Example (from the Swiss corpus of text messages: sms4science.ch):

(3) _Tu penses que jaurai quand [les sous] [sur mon compte]?_  
You think that I have when the money on my bank account

When do you think that I have the money on my bank account?

(see also Matthieu 2016 for more examples along this line)
French In-situ questions do not show the same surface structure:

- For WiQs, *fully spelled out phrases* cannot appear as arguments, only clitics.
- For echo questions, *fully spelled out phrases* are fine.

When reference to the clitic cannot be provided by the context, speaker use (left or right) dislocation of the referent.

In a way, WiQs have to adhere to a special (minimal) form

Other means to remain minimal:

- clefting of the wh-phrase
- word order variation (scrambling)
Out-of-the-blue WiQs: *(indefinite and brand-new elements):*

(4a) You are visiting your brother in a new city. You want to buy a newspaper somewhere, but haven’t mentioned anything about it yet:

\[ \text{J’peux trouver où un tabac ?} \]
\[ \text{I can find where a kiosk} \]

“Where can I find a kiosk?“

(4b) Posted on a band’s facebook page:

\[ \text{Ya quand un spectacle à Cergy et/ou à Amiens ?} \]
\[ \text{there has when a show at Cergy and/or at Amiens} \]

“When is there a show in Cergy and/or in Amiens?“
How is French special? Prosodic constraints on French

• French (unlike other Romance languages) possesses no freely applicable lexical stress (e.g. Delais-Roussarie et. al. (2015))
• Stress-marking is generated by the position of the word in the sentence.
• A sentence is divided into intonational phrases (IPs)
• IPs are again divided into accentual phrases (APs)
• A word gets stress when it occupies the right-most position of an AP or the last of an IP
• Jun & Fougeron (2002): AP-prosody is default movement pattern of /L(HiL)H*/
  The final H* is the pitch accent.
• An AP can contain one or more content words plus (numerous) function words.
• A full DP would get its own AP, a clitic would not

Figure 1: Jun & Fougeron (2002): AP structure
My Proposal:

French WiQs are not, if possible, deviating from declarative prosody

To get H* marked, the wh-phrase must be located on the right border of an AP

First-AP-constraint: The wh-word has to sit at the right boundary of the first AP

Stylized surface structure of a WiQ
- Dislocation of DPs
- Movement of the wh-phrase into the first AP
Prosodic features differ in WiQs and echos:

**eWiQ prosody:** full DPs can be dephrased, keeping prosody low until the wh-word, adhering to the constraint by changing prosody.

**WiQ prosody:** H* is assigned to the wh-word ‘qui’ at the end of the first AP. The complement ‘au concert’ is a second AP. Adhering to the constraint by changing syntax.

**Echo prosody:** Everything in front of the wh-word is kept low until the wh-word gets H% at the very end. Adhering to the constraint by changing prosody.

However: Both WiQs and echos adhere to the first AP constraint!

Syntactic rephrasing

Prosodic rephrasing
Going back to meaning:

- The ‘givenness’ inference is a byproduct of the fact that WiQs only accept clitics
  - Clitic arguments are often given
- Givenness is not encoded in the logical form (it is not part of the semantics)
  - WiQs do not need to be uttered in ‘given’ contexts: WiQs can be uttered out of the blue

WiQs are only possible in the right shape, givenness is not the right explanation
**Conclusion:**

**From the First-AP-constraint follows:**
- Use of clitics -> full DPs would form their own AP
- Syntactic restructuring with dislocation and clefts to form AP
- No prosodic strong interveners
- Appearance of “givenness“ as a byproduct

**Future work:**
Work does fit into Richards (2016) contiguity theory framework:
- *Contiguity*
  
  Given a wh- phrase $\alpha$ and a complementizer C where $\alpha$ takes scope, $\alpha$ and C must be dominated by a single $\phi$ (prosodic unit), within which $\alpha$ is contiguity-prominent.

  $\rightarrow$ C contiguous with wh-phrase and wh-phrase marked by $H^*$ accent on the right

**But: where is this constraint coming from?**
How is the interplay between prosody, syntax and information structure?
What drives the different prosodic features in interrogative sentences?
… (suggestions are very welcome!)
Prosodic constraints + No fronted wh-phrase

wh-word at the right edge of AP

wh-word in First AP

[Tu vas où]_{AP}\? (in-situ)  [Maria va où]_{AP}\? (echo)  [Où est-ce-que]_{AP} tu vas? (fronted)

- Wh in-situ seems to function differently throughout Romance languages, prosody is different in between Romance languages
  - Italien dialects may show similar phenomenon
  - Spanish in-situ questions are licensed by discourse givenness as a follow-up move (Biezma (in press)), that is why they are more restricted than Spanish fronted questions
My work is part Project 2 of the Research Unit 2111 ’Questions at the interfaces‘ at the University of Konstanz, together with María Biezma, Georg Kaiser and Katharina Kaiser. I want to thank all my informants, especially Méline Bonnaud for her insightfulness and Lise Moawad for her voice.
References:

- Elisabeth; Ueberwasser, Simone; Ruef, Beni (2009-2014). Swiss SMS Corpus. University of Zurich. 
  https://sms.linguistik.uzh.ch
**Appendix: Focus**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Other syntactic strategies driven by prosodic constraints: Focus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Focus realization is dispreferred in those cases, in which focus does not correspond to a default phrasing. If permitted by the syntax, clefting is used (Féry (2001)).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Who has climbed the mountain?)

(2a) *Anne a escaladé la montagne.  
Anne has climbed the montain  
"Anne has climbed the mountain“

(2b) C’est *Anne qui a escaladé la montagne  
It is Anne that has climbed the mountain  
"Anne has climbed the mountain“

(What did Anne climb?)

(3a) *Anne a escaladé *la montagne.  
Anne has climbed the montain  
"Anne has climbed the mountain“

(2b) C’est *la montagne que Anne a escaladée.  
It is the mountain that Anne has climbed  
"Anne has climbed the mountain“
Appendix: Intervention effects

Other intervention effects:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fokus particle:</th>
<th>Demonstrative pronouns:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(2a) *T‘ aimes pas manger quoi?</td>
<td>(3a) *T‘as trouvé ça-la où?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you like not what</td>
<td>You‘ve found this where?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>„What do you not like to eat?“</td>
<td>„Where did you find this?“</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

=> Circumvented by using cleft structures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non-presuppositional cleft:</th>
<th>Presuppositional cleft:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(2b) Ya quoi que t‘ aimes pas manger?</td>
<td>(3b) C‘est où que t‘as trouvé ça-la?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There has what that you like not eating</td>
<td>It is where that you‘ve found this</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>„What do you not like to eat?“</td>
<td>„Where did you find this?“</td>
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</tbody>
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